



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Public Library

FOR IMMEDIATE INFORMATION

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New Exhibits at Central Library Pay Homage to Legendary San Diego Librarian Clara Breed *Program in Celebration of Clara Breed's 100th Birthday*

SAN DIEGO – In commemoration of what would have been her 100th birthday, the City of San Diego Public Library is celebrating the life and work of one of its own: Clara Estelle Breed. She worked at for the library system for 42 years, including the last 24 as library director. Two special exhibits now on display at the Central Library showcase her life and the impact she had on the San Diego Public Library.

The two exhibits that make up “**Clara Breed – 100th Anniversary**” include photographs, information about Ms. Breed’s life and various personal and work materials. The exhibits, located on the first floor and in the third floor Wangenheim Room, will remain on display through March 31.

Born in Iowa on March 19, 1906, Clara Breed was one of two daughters of a Baptist preacher and the family was on the move constantly. When her father died in Chicago in 1920, Clara, her sister and mother moved to San Diego to be with other family members. Clara graduated from San Diego High School, as well as Pomona College and Case-Western Reserve University.

In 1928, Clara was hired by the San Diego Public Library as the system’s first children’s librarian. Many San Diego children of Japanese descent used the library and Clara Breed considered them close friends. During World War II, when Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps, Ms. Breed spoke out and wrote articles criticizing the U.S. military program. A new book, “Dear Miss Breed” by Joanne Oppenheim, was published last month commemorating Ms. Breed’s love and assistance to Japanese American children from San Diego who were sent to internment camps. The book was officially launched at the Central Library on Feb. 23 with special events and programs.

Breed was appointed library director in 1946 and remained in that position until 1970. During her tenure, 19 new libraries were opened, including the Central Library in 1954. In addition, three bookmobiles were added and a governmental reference library was created. The Library’s circulation more than doubled and the number of books in the Library collection quadrupled. She wrote the definitive history of the San Diego Public Library, “Turning the Pages,” in 1982. Clara Breed passed away on Sept. 4, 1994, at age 88.

The Central Library is located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego. For more information, call 619-236-5800 or visit the Library on the City’s Web site at www.sandiego.gov/public-library.

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